



COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY | JUSTICE LAB

Update on the Implementation of Vermont's "Raise the Age" Law

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VT Senate Committee on Judiciary
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**Emerging
Adult
Justice
Project**

eajustice.org

The Emerging Adult Justice Project

Who we are:

Research project within the Columbia Justice Lab dedicated to informing and driving developmentally appropriate and equitable justice responses that support and appreciate young people on their paths to adulthood.

What we do:

- Publish and promote high-impact research reports defining the challenges facing emerging adults and innovative approaches to address those challenges
- Provide research and guidance to localities enacting change in their justice systems
- Partner with specific sites to assess and implement reforms

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ACT 201: “Raise the Age” (RtA)

- Enacted in 2018
- Gradually raises the upper age jurisdiction of Family Court from the 18th to 20th birthday
- 18-year-olds included in July 2020 (Phase 1)
- 19-year-olds delayed until July 2024 (Phase 2)
- Purpose: **PUBLIC SAFETY**



RESEARCH

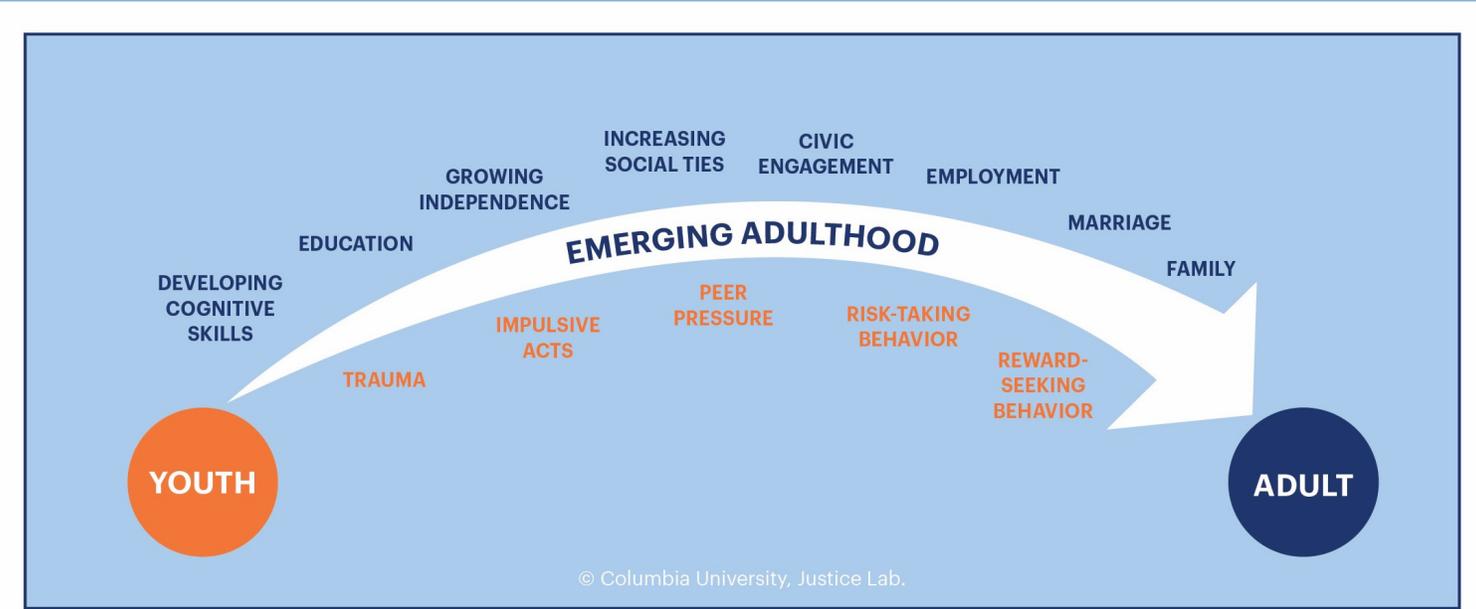
MIND THE GAP

PRACTICE
& POLICIES

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Developmental factors and milestones in transition to adulthood



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Emerging Adult Justice (EAJ)

- Creating fair, effective and **developmentally appropriate** services, programs and opportunities for EAs
- Strengths-based, growth-focused approaches

Positive EA outcomes = PUBLIC SAFETY

RtA Implementation PLAN

- > 1 year planning process led by DCF w/ input from all key stakeholders (and support from the Justice Lab)
- Plan submitted to the Legislature on Nov. 1, 2019
- Concrete recommendations, including investment in diversion to manage expected increase in caseloads
- *What's happened since?*

Justice Lab's Report based on publicly available
information

Decline in # of filings for delinquency cases in the Family Division for all youth

of New Delinquency Court Cases Filed by Year

Data for FY12-FY22 from DCF FSD 2024 Annual Progress & Services Report
Data for FY23 from Office of the Attorney General Dec. 2023 Report to the Legislature on
Diversion and Pretrial Services



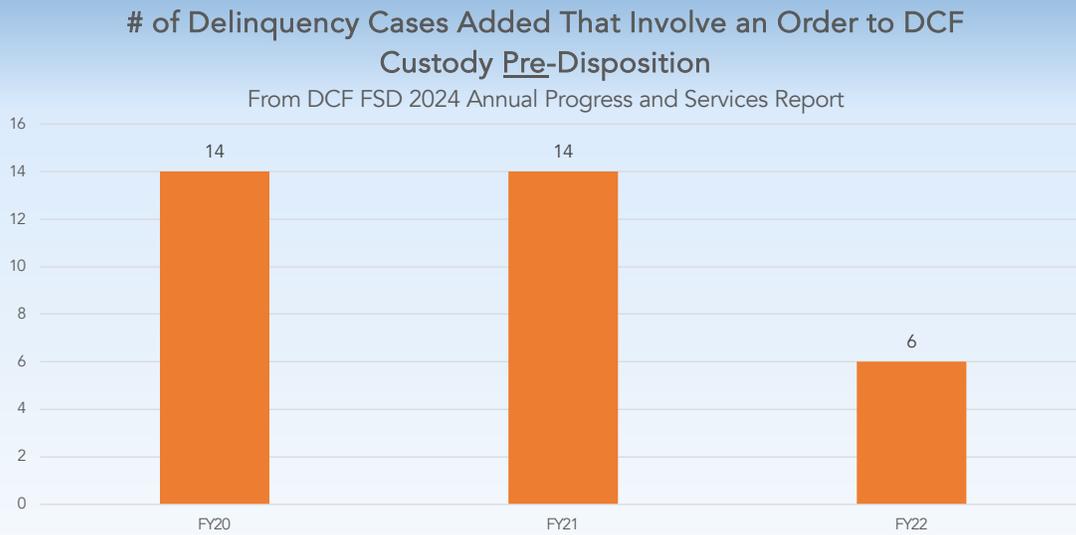
6-year trend of increasing # of youths on probation for delinquency cases reverses and declines *after* Phase 1 of Raise the Age is implemented

of Youth on Probation (as counted on one day each year)

Data from DCF FSD 2024 Annual Progress & Services Report



Decline in # of youths ordered to DCF custody due to a delinquency case PRE-disposition



Decline in # of youths ordered to DCF custody due to a delinquency case POST-disposition

DCF Custody as a Result of Delinquency
From DCF FSD 2024 Annual Progress and Services Report



Next steps & Recommendations

1. Implement Phase 2 of RtA
 - Concerns articulated before implementation that juvenile caseloads would be overwhelmed by Raise the Age have not been borne out.
 - Key delinquency caseloads are down
2. Focus on relevant data & data transparency for key points of contact
 - Data by age
 - Data by gender, race and ethnicity, etc.
3. Make strategic investments – e.g., pre-court and pre-merit diversion

QUESTIONS?

Thank you!